

budget. The best way for that to happen is for Congress and I to work together.

In the coming weeks, we must seize the opportunity we now have to give the American people a moment of real bipartisan achievement. Over the last several months I have worked closely with the bipartisan congressional leadership. We have spent hours and hours together in serious and productive discussions. The congressional leaders and I have identified \$700 billion in savings common to both our plans. That is more than enough to balance the budget in 7 years and to provide a tax cut.

I am ready to work with the leaders of Congress to finish the job. Toward that end, I have invited the bipartisan congressional leadership to meet with me tomorrow at the White House. I will urge them to address our pressing national concerns: balancing the budget, welfare reform, the Kennedy-Kassebaum health care bill, the antiterrorism legislation. And we'll also discuss the prospects for progress on all these areas

in the weeks ahead. We have to meet our common obligation to act on our urgent national priorities. We should enact a balanced budget and we should do it now, not after the November election, not after the political season, not later, but now. The American people deserve nothing less. It is the right thing to do.

Now I'd like to call on the Vice President to discuss some of the priorities in the budget that we are pursuing consistent with our strategy. And then others will come forward to brief you on other aspects of the budget.

Mr. Vice President.

[At this point, the Vice President made remarks.]

Q. Mr. President, have you heard from the congressional leaders?

The President. We're going to meet tomorrow.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:07 p.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building.

Remarks to the National Center for Tobacco-Free Kids

March 20, 1996

Thank you very much. Thank you, Alan. And I want to thank the Lung Association, the Heart Association, the Cancer Society, all the physicians who are here today with the various medical groups. Dr. Bristow, it's good to see you. And I thank all of you for being here.

I thank Secretary Shalala and Commissioner Kessler and CDC Director David Satcher for their leadership. I want to thank someone who is not here but who had a lot to do with this effort—I thank the Vice President, who lost his own beloved sister to lung cancer, for his strength and leadership in this endeavor.

Normally, I don't think the people of America should give the President an award for anything, because the President's job is award enough. It is an uncommon gift with a great responsibility. But to tell you the truth, I'm kind of tickled about this today, because I admired, indeed I loved, Mike Synar very much. He was a good man and a brave man who gave the rest of us a great deal of energy and hope and direction. And our country could do with a few more like him, people that just rear back and

stand up and do the right thing. And if it doesn't work out, they just laugh and go on and don't expect any kind of a blue ribbon or award at the end of the day.

When I gave the State of the Union Address and spoke about the challenges facing our country as we move into the next century, I said, and I repeat, that our first challenge—not the Government, the people's first challenge—is to strengthen our families and cherish all our children and give every single one of our young people the childhood that he or she deserves. One of the most important things we can do in meeting that challenge is to protect our children from what is rapidly becoming the single greatest threat to their health: cigarette smoking and tobacco addiction.

This is, like other challenges, as Secretary Shalala so eloquently said, a challenge we have to meet together. To be sure, Government has a role to play. I want to acknowledge the presence of two other Members of Congress here today who stood shoulder to shoulder with Mike Synar, our good friend Congressman Dick Dur-

bin from Illinois, who won his primary for the United States Senate last night. Congratulations, Dick. It is a measure of his commitment to the issue that I talked to him after midnight his time last night, but he suited up and showed up here today anyway. We thank you. And Congressman Marty Meehan from Massachusetts, thank you, sir, for being here and for your good work here as well.

I thank the parents of America who have become increasingly sensitive to this issue and are working hard to teach their children. I thank the young people here who are working hard to reach out to their peers and who often can have more influence on their peers than their parents or the President. I thank the athletes and the entertainers who are committed to being role models, the businesses who control access to tobacco products, the teachers, the coaching, the advertising executives. I thank the health care professionals and the volunteers.

Because of this great sea of people in America, what was once the work of a few lonely activists has grown into a national movement to protect the health and the future of our children. Three thousand young people start to smoke every day, and a thousand of them will have their lives shortened as a result. It seems to me that as President, if I say that what I really want is for every American child who is willing to work for it to have his or her shot at the American dream, that cannot be done unless we first of all try to guarantee them the existence and the health necessary to pursue their dreams. And that is also what the rest of us must do.

We have, as all of you know, proposed ways to crack down on advertising that tells young people smoking is cool. We've proposed ways to make it harder for children and teenagers to buy cigarettes by reducing their access to vending machines and free samples. We issued the Synar regulation in January to demand that States, in return for the Federal money they received, do more to enforce their own laws against the sale of tobacco to minors. It's worth noting here that it is illegal in every single State of the Union to sell any form of tobacco to minors. We're working closely with State governments to ensure that the Synar regulations are implemented quickly and decisively. And I have to say that so far the results on that front have been quite encouraging to me.

All of you I want to thank for supporting these efforts. All of you who have been fighting for a long time are now working to bring your experience in new ways to bear on this effort through the National Center for Tobacco-Free Kids. And I want to welcome especially some of the people in this room who are new to the struggle in this effort but who can make all the difference.

First, let me say I am very glad to announce that two groups of America's athletes, heroes to so many young people, have come forward to help. Young women in particular are bombarded with billboards which suggest that smoking is cool and glamorous and a good way to stay thin. The women of the U.S. National Soccer Team know better. This spring and this summer, they are going to make America proud when they compete in the Olympics. And just when thousands of young girls around the country are looking up to them, they are going to make it clear that smoking is not cool. Working with the Federal Government, they have launched a major promotional advertisement effort called Smoke-Free Kids and Soccer. The effort, including television advertising, will be centered around the team's matches all across our country leading up to the Olympics in Atlanta this summer. It will make a real difference in people's lives, and two members of that team are here today. I would like for them to stand and be recognized. Thank you very much. *[Applause]*

Former major league baseball players Joe Garagiola and Bill Tuttle, along with Mrs. Tuttle, have stepped up to the plate to help get spit tobacco out of baseball. As leaders of the National Spit Tobacco Education Campaign, they are working to educate players about the dangers and to help protect the health of young fans who look up to them. In fact, they've just come back from a trip down to spring training in Florida where they met with team owners and the players' union, and they are making some very impressive progress as well. I want to ask Joe and Bill and Mrs. Tuttle to stand and I want to thank them. Thank you so much, and God bless you. *[Applause]*

I also want to thank some businesses who are doing their part. Businesses, of course, have a right to sell cigarettes to adults, but they also have a responsibility, a legal one and a moral one, to prevent cigarette sales to minors. I'm very proud and happy to announce that major

United States supermarket chains are taking decisive steps to curtail the sale of cigarettes and tobacco to young people. A&P company, Giant Food, and Pratts Supermarkets are instituting mandatory training of all their cashiers to ensure that they know the law and understand their obligations to enforce it. That means requiring identification from all young people who seek to buy cigarettes. In July, A&P Chairman James Wood will recommend to the board of directors that A&P discontinue the use of all vending machines by the end of the year. Giant is going to eliminate vending machines in all stores except for their 24-hour stores. Pratts doesn't allow any cigarette vending machines at all. And in the meantime, A&P and Giant are converting their vending machines so they only operate with tokens that must be purchased from a cashier.

I urge every supermarket chain and every individual grocery store in America to follow the lead of these three companies and shut down tobacco sales to minors. I'd like to ask the people here from those companies to stand to be recognized today. Thank you very much. [Applause]

Let me just say one other thing about them. You know, I spend a great deal of my time as your President trying to find ways to both generate more jobs for America and to help American businesses make more money, because both those things are very good for our country. And I'm proud of the fact that our country has produced in the last 3 years 8.4 million new jobs. And unlike the past 15 years, almost all of these jobs have been created in the private sector as we have downsized the Government. Therefore, any President and any citizen must think seriously before we ask a business to do something that will cost it money. This decision costs these people money. And they did it because it was the right thing to do for America. And I thank you for that very much.

I want to thank all the activists who are here in the room who have been recognized and those of you who have not. And especially I'd like to say a word of thanks to the former employees of tobacco companies who have stood up to tell the world the truth. And I want to recognize one in particular, the late Victor Crawford, whose wife, Linda, is here today. He was a great champion for our children. We miss him today. We wish he were here, and we know

he's smiling down on us. Thank you, Linda, for being here, and God bless you.

My friends, we have come a long way in this endeavor, indeed, a long way since our administration made the first announcement about our efforts to reduce tobacco advertising and tobacco sales to young people. Now we have supermarket chains, athletes, workers, private citizens who have recognized the threat tobacco poses. And this movement is producing results. Just last week there was a major breakthrough when Liggett agreed to settle its lawsuits. It became the very first tobacco company to acknowledge that tobacco can be deadly. This is the first crack in the stone wall of denial. My message to other tobacco companies is, therefore, simple and direct: Take responsibility. Sell to adults, but draw the line on children.

I'm happy that Liggett has also agreed to begin changing their own advertising practices so that they have less influence over young people. That's a good start. And now I want them and the other tobacco companies to go the distance. If selling cigarettes to minors is illegal, no good corporate citizen should be aiming advertising at those minors.

My fellow Americans, we can win this fight. We can save countless lives of our young people. We can give them the future that we imagine when we look into the bright faces of these children who are here. But we have to do it together. It is folly to pretend that any one of us, including the President, can do it alone.

When he graduated from high school in 1968, Mike Synar called on his classmates to, quote, "Stand and be counted when the occasion arises." Well, he always did. This occasion requires us to do it for him, and I am honored that we can do it in his name.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:50 p.m. in the East Room at the White House upon receiving the Mike Synar National Public Service Award from the Coalition on Smoking OR Health. In his remarks, he referred to Alan Synar, brother of the late Representative Mike Synar; Lonnie Bristow, president, American Medical Association; Julie Foudy and Carla Overbeck, cocaptains, U.S. Women's National Soccer Team; and Bill Tuttle's wife, Gloria.